COMIC BOOK PROFILES™

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The magazine about comic book professionals

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NEAL ADAMS

WITH SUPPORTING INTERVIEWS BY

Terry Austin
Brian Bolland
John Byrne
Harlan Ellison
Dick Giordano
Dan Jurgens
Joe Kubert
Jerry Ordway
Ronn Sutton
Roy Thomas
and many more!

The X-Men: TM & © 1998 Marvel Characters, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

FROM THE PUBLISHER

In this issue we talked with Neal Adams, his family, friends, and associates. We had so much material, that I made the decision to sacrifice artwork in favor of interviews. I'd like to know what you, the readers, would prefer.

I'd like to thank everyone who participated in this issue: Kristine, Zeea and Jason Adams, Terry Austin, Brian Bolland, John Byrne, Harlan Ellison, Dick Giordano, Dan Jurgens, Joe Kubert, Bill Neville, Bill Nichols, Jerry Ordway, Ronn Sutton, Roy Thomas, and Steven Tice. Thanks also go to Terry Austin, Joe Staton, and Fred Hembeck for contributing artwork from their personal collections. Special thanks to Harlan Ellison for being so generous with his time. And many thanks, of course, to Neal, for all his assistance with this issue.

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ART IN THIS ISSUE

The artwork on the cover is from *The X-Men* #62, page 7. Pencils by Neal Adams, inks by Tom Palmer. The *Archie's Jokebook Magazine* strip (p. 8) was originally reprinted in *The Neal Adams Index*. Ben Casey cartoon (p. 9) originally appeared in *The Cartoonist Cookbook* along with Neal's menu for a Chinese dinner. Ben Casey strip (p. 9) is from July 2, 1966. Portraits of Neal Adams (p. 14) and Harlan Ellison (p. 29) are from *The Story Behind the Story of "Rock God,"* originally published in *Creepy* magazine #32. Descriptions for all other artwork appear with the art.

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scanned by Potifar, June 2006

Neal Adams cover from Phantom Stranger #12. *Phantom Stranger TM & ©1998 DC Comics. All Rights Reserved.*

PROFILE

NEAL ADAMS

Growing up, were you a comic book fan?

I wouldn't say I was a comic book fan, the way that people talk about comic book fans now. I certainly read comic books, traded comic books, and collected comic books. The reason we traded them was because someone had a comic book that we wanted but couldn't afford. We wanted it, and they wanted ours, so we would trade. So in a generation that didn't have as much money lying around as the generation today does, we got to read all the comic books that came out because we traded them. We might buy one or two comic books in a month but in that same month we would get to read all the comic books because we traded. That doesn't seem to be quite as prevalent today because there's a lot of money around. Unfortunately if you want to buy all the comic books that are around today you've got to spend a hundred dollars a week.

Did you enjoy any particular genre of comics more than another, for example, horror or superhero?

No, I don't think so. I think as I got older I liked work that was done well, and work that was well drawn. When you're six years old you don't really pay attention to the drawing. When you're ten years old, you recognize Frank Frazetta and Al Williamson so you start to become more critical. On the other hand, the artwork didn't stop you from reading comic books. Remember then comic books were sixty-four pages long, and there was never one artist in a book. You didn't buy a book for an artist; you bought it for the comic book, for the reading. It was

TIMELINE

Neal Adams

1941 Neal Adams born on June 6th, in Governor's Island, New York.

1959 His first professional work is published in *Archie's Jokebook Magazine* #41. He starts to work for Howard Nostrand later that year.

1962 The *Ben Casey* daily strip written by Jerry Capp starts.

1964 The *Ben Casey* Sunday strip begins; also written by Capp.

1966 The *Ben Casey* strip is cancelled.

1967 Neal's first DC work is published in *Our Army At War* #82. His first Deadman story is published in *Strange Adventures* #206.

1969 Neal's first work for Warren is published in *Creepy* # 14. Also, Neal starts his run on *The X-Men.*

1970 "Rock God," written by Harlan Ellison, is published in *Creepy* #32. Neal begins working on *Green Lantern/Green Arrow* with Denny O'Neil writing.

1971 Neal founds Continuity Associates with Dick Giordano.

1973 Neal is art director for the Broadway play *Warp*. *The Neal Adams Index* is published.

1975 Assists Joe Shuster and Jerry Siegel *The Art of Neal Adams* [vol. 1] is published. A second volume is published in 1977.

1976 *The Neal Adams Treasury* is published.

1978 *Superman vs. Muhammad Ali* is published.

1982 *Ms. Mystic* published by Pacific Comics.

1983 *Skateman* published by Pacific Comics.

1984 *Zero Patrol,* published by Continuity Comics, is released.

1980's -1990's Various comics published by Continuity Comics. Titles include; *Valeria, Ms. Mystic, Cyberrad, Samuree,* and *Revengers.*

only the comic book companies who really knew which artist was which.

When did the idea of being an artist first crystallize for you?
When I was about six or seven years old. I sat at the kitchen table and copied the drawings from a set of old maid cards that my mother had, and apparently I was so good at it that my mother thought that I would be a great artist when I grew up. You know, when your mother says things like that you take it to heart because she's your mom. I tended to be able to draw things that other people did. I was able to copy things quite directly. That led me in the direction of art. Not that it was my goal to be an artist, but it certainly was a direction that I liked.

Did you have formal training as an artist?
I attended The School of Industrial Art, which is now called the School of Art and Design. It's called a vocational high school for the convenience of it. However, it's really very much an art school, but it's for high school students, and ergo it is a vocational high school. Many people in the business graduated from that school and are continuing to graduate from there.

Your first freelance job was for Archie?
I did Archie pages, and I was paid thirty five dollars a page for first writing, then pencilling, then lettering, then inking. I did joke pages for the *Archie Joke Book* which was two gags a page that involved Archie characters.

How long did you do this for?
Well, it seemed like forever to me, but it was only for about three months.

It was around that time that you became an assistant for Howard Nostrand?
Yes. By that time Howard Nostrand had ceased being a comic book artist. By then he was an advertising illustrator, which was a much better way to make a living. The studio that he was in had several other advertising artists. So in that studio, besides being Howard Nostrand's assistant, which was wonderful, I got to learn about advertising, storyboards, advertising illustrations, and any number of things. It was a great place to be. There were enough people there to teach me that in my sponge-like way I learned as much as I could for about the three months that I was there.

When you were an assistant for Howard Nostrand, was there one thing that you learned that sticks with you till this day?
Yes, discipline. There was a guy at Howard's studio named Elmer Wexler. Elmer Wexler was a disciplined artist whereas Howard was an undisciplined artist. Howard would stay up all night, Elmer would leave the studio at five o' clock. Howard would smoke and drink, Elmer would go to the gym. Howard went from job to job. Elmer lived in Connecticut and had a house. He was very organized with his work. I realized that there were two sides to this business. Elmer for all his professionalism, didn't have as much fun as Howard. He got the job done, and was very disciplined, but he didn't really have as much fun. I was put in a position in my mind, of deciding what kind of an artist I would be. I guess I decided that I

would be both. I would be the undisciplined ruffian that I was tempted to be, and I would also try to be a businessman and run my career and my life more like Elmer whenever I could. At times I learned to go home at five o' clock, but when I went home at five o' clock I drew comics. I never smoked or drank but I always had a good time. I always feel good about what I do. I have a really great family, and I try to be happy.

Elmer also helped you to refine your style?
Yes. Not so much by helping me, but by being a bastard to me. He was a very good bastard to me. If I hadn't done anything that was worthy of his comment, he wouldn't comment on it. He would say things like, "Well this isn't better enough for it to be worth me commenting on." So I would go away and I would do something that was worthy of his comment and sure enough he *would* comment. He wasn't lying to me, he was telling me the truth. I've passed along that truth to some poor suffering comic artists along the way. He was a very difficult critic, he really made me improve. I did an ad for a cigarette company. It was a comic book ad that appeared in the comic section of the newspaper, if you can believe that. Anyway, I did the ad and I thought I did a good job. I did it from scratch. I wrote it, drew it, and inked it. I showed it to Elmer, and Elmer said, "You know, I'll tell you this, it's really not worth me commenting on. You've put a lot of things in here that are easy to do. You've done a lot of imitating my style, thank you, but if you're going to imitate my style then put the amount of work I would put into it. And please don't show me any-

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An early example of Neal's artwork that appeared in *Archie's Jokebook Magazine.*

thing until it's better." So I put the picture on the wall and threw darts at it. Then I went back to the drawing board, and I busted my hump to do a similar ad having to do with somebody robbing a payroll in a production company, and I researched *everything*. I researched the television cameras, the way the cables lay on the floor, and I did a really good job. I took it to Elmer, and he said, "You know, I've got to tell you, this is pretty good. Rather than me give you advice, which you seem to have already taken, why don't you take this to Johnstone and Cushing and try to get some work up there." Elmer did some work for Johnstone and Cushing, and it was a very generous thing for Elmer to suggest I go up there, beyond generous. While I was up there interviewing, Tim Johnstone went into another room and called Elmer to make sure that this kid wasn't lying to him and that I had actually done the work. Elmer told them that I had indeed done it, and had done so under difficult circumstances. So they gave me work. Johnstone and Cushing was a place that did comics for advertising, essentially. I learned a lot about advertising, illustration, different techniques of line illustration; I learned a tremendous amount there.

How long did you work at Johnstone and Cushing?
For quite a while. I did it through the *Ben Casey* comic strip.

I imagine you had to be disciplined there also?
Part of the discipline I learned doing pages for the telephone company called *Chip Martin College Reporter*. They were full eight panel pages that appeared in *Boy's Life Magazine*, and everything was referenced, down to the switches on the wall. I was sufficiently disciplined, and I knew I was competing with the best guys in comics who got work at Johnstone and Cushing. The comic book business had fallen apart and guys who were left over went into animation, became ghosts for other artists, or they went to Johnstone and Cushing. Johnstone and Cushing wouldn't use anybody unless they were the best. I was this nineteen year old punk and I had to show I could beat anybody. Therefore they would have to give me the work. I really pulled out the stops. It was just a very intense time for me. They were delighted, and in fact Johnstone and Cushing had a birthday party for me when I was twenty, and all the freelance artists came in for it. I pulled one of the guys over to the side, and said "Wow, this is really great. But why are you making such a fuss over this?" He said, "The reason we're doing this is because we're grateful that we don't have to tell our wives that a teenager has beaten us out of a job anymore." It was a very rowdy time.

You did Ben Casey for three and a half years around this time. Were the obligations of putting out a strip every day difficult for you?
Well, while I was doing the strip I was also doing advertising. Was it difficult? No more or less than anything else. You have to understand that people are paying me money to draw and to write. I would do it for free, but they're giving me money for it. If I had a job digging ditches and you asked me if the grind was tough, I'd say yes, it was tough, I was digging ditches all day. But how can it be tough for an artist who sits behind a desk and draws pictures? Maybe there are people around who suffer mental cruelty from other people, or that they are oppressed by somebody else. But I'm not oppressed. I'm one of the luckiest people in the world. I do exactly what I want and people give me money for it. So was it difficult? I put in heavy hours. I did a lot of

From The Cartoonist Cookbook © 1966. Published by the Newspaper Comics Council, Inc. Ben Casey TM & © 1966 Newspaper Enterprise Association. *All Rights Reserved.*

research. I put pressure on myself. But I've always had a lot of energy. I was probably the only guy who did a syndicated strip who also did an equal amount of advertising.

After Ben Casey ended, you began doing work for Warren Publications and then DC Comics.

I got my first break at Warren. I had some advertising clients, and I had done an illustration portfolio because that's what I thought I was going to do. Then somebody stole my portfolio. I had worked on it for six months,
I dropped it off at an advertising agency and when I went back to the agency, the portfolio was gone. I was hard put because I had spent six months working on that portfolio and now I had to do something. So I took some samples to Warren Publications and I ran into Archie Goodwin. Archie was willing to give me work. I continually gave myself challenges for the stories I did for Archie. I did some in wash, some in pencil, some in different techniques, and I realized that maybe I ought to be doing some regular comics. I knew from having gone out when I was a teenager that the doors were basically closed at DC Comics. Things had changed a little so I thought I'd give it a shot. I spoke to Bob Kanigher on the phone and I went to see him. He gave me work. I didn't expect it, and that was my start at DC Comics.

MAGGIE, MAGGIE! HOW CAN YOU ASK ME SUCH A RIDICULOUS QUESTION AT SUCH A CRITICAL POINT IN THE OPERATION... O.K., O.K., I GIVE UP! WHAT'S A "WOK"?
SOMETHING YOU THROW AT A WABBIT, SILLY!

What was it like when you first started working for DC?

Remember that the decline in comics happened around 1953-54, and we're talking about ten years later. It pretty much settled down to certain good artists that were around. You had Carmine Infantino, Gil Kane, Ross Andru, Joe

BEN CASEY
HE'S FAINTED...OR COLLAPSED! DO SOMETHING...!
DR. CASEY...BEN CASEY ...IN THE AUDIENCE... HURRY...
DR. BEN CASEY... PLEASE COME BACK-STAGE IMMEDIATELY!

Ben Casey TM & ©1966 Newspaper Enterprise Association. All Rights Reserved.

Kubert, Russ Heath, Mort Drucker and a few others. It seemed like Bob Kanigher had the only good artists that were left at DC. I wouldn't say that DC had the best artists around, they were just the survivors after the holocaust. At that time, Marvel was coming along, they were doing superheroes, and it was a bit of a shock over at DC. I can tell you from personal experience that they didn't know how to handle it. They would say, "We have to get some new people in here." But they wanted to take care of the people they already employed. They had now built up a habit of ten years of not letting anybody new in. If you were to view it from the outside, you would say that this was insane. You had Marvel coming along and grabbing up anybody that they could find, but essentially guys who had been around for years and years, like Don Heck and Steve Ditko. They weren't really recruiting new people, but there was a sense of newness. But at DC Comics there was a sense of nothing. I had to smuggle new artists in and show their work and promise to ink them in case something went wrong. It was a terrible time at DC.

You rocked the boat when you started to do X-Men.

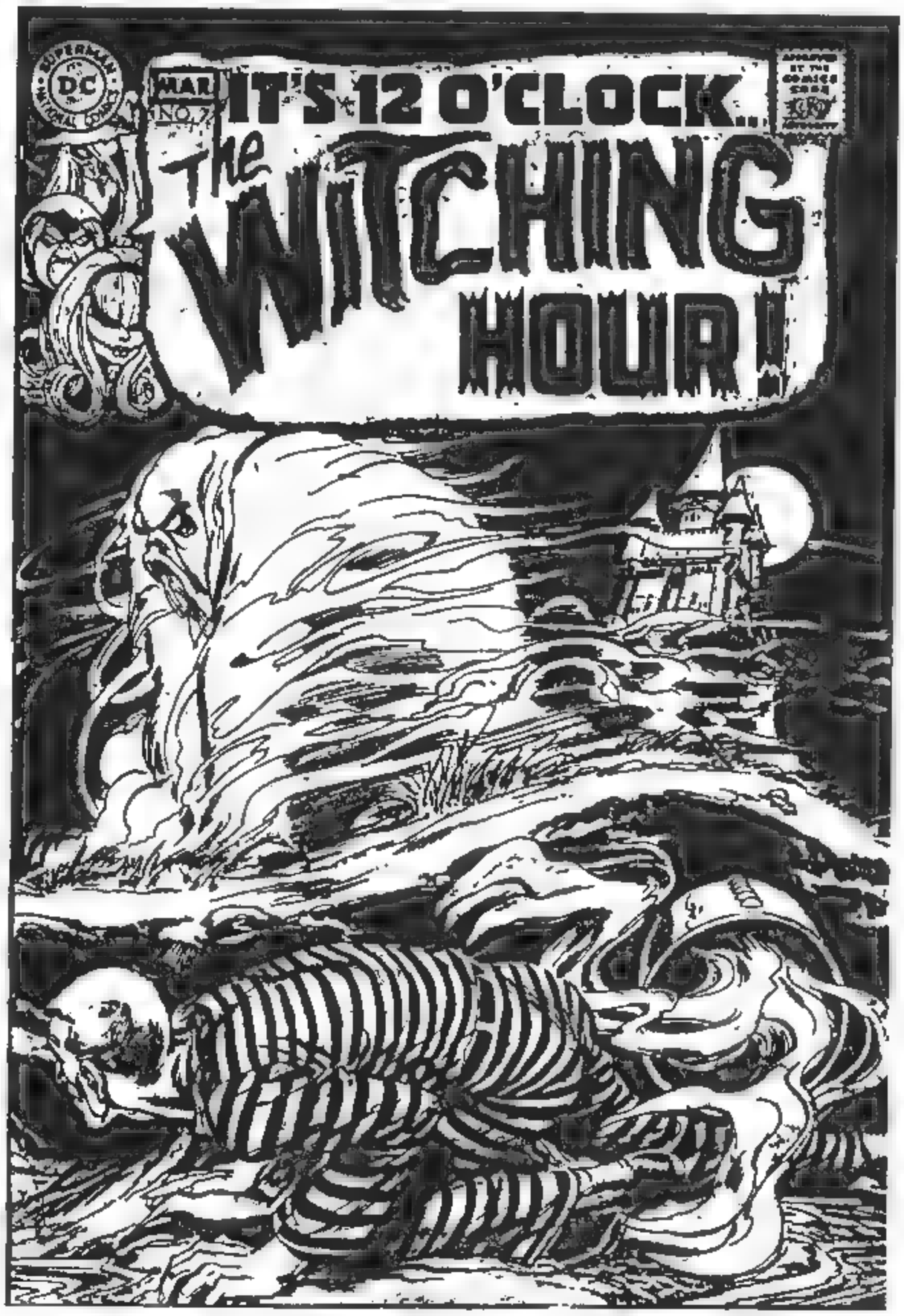
That's what boats are for. They don't put boats there unless it's to rock them. Yes, well, I rocked the boat. It was good. I think it was good for everybody. Before I did *X-Men*, artists would go back and forth from DC and Marvel Comics and they would change their names. I didn't like this very much. It seemed to me that an awful lot of things had to change. It was perfectly logical to me to go over to Marvel and pick up a job. So I went to see Stan Lee, and Stan basically said, sure you can do any book in the place. I said, "Well which is your worst selling title?" Stan replied, "*X-Men*. We're going to cancel it in two issues." I said "I'd like to do *X-Men*." Stan let me do *X-Men* with the idea that after it was cancelled I would work on a "major title." Then Stan asked me, "What should we call you in the credits?" I said, "Neal Adams." Stan said, "Well, how will DC Comics feel about that?" I asked Stan if he was really worried about how DC Comics would feel. He said, "No, but if you want to have another name you can." I told him I didn't want to use another name. He then told me that they didn't really like artists who were working for Marvel also working for DC. I told him that perhaps he didn't want me to do a book for Marvel. Stan laughed and said, "No, no, that'll be all right." Then he said something like, "Well, OK. Then what about a nickname? I'm going to call you Nefarious Neal." So I agreed, "You can call me nefarious." It was a funny conversation. Once that was done, and once my name was on the book, guys started using their own names when they went back and forth from DC and Marvel. They weren't afraid anymore. It was a stupid practice. I had come into an industry that existed in the stone age. To be perfectly honest, there were so many things that were obviously wrong, so clearly wrong that I could attack those things and change those things.

How widely known was it that people used different names at different companies? Did most people know about it and just look the other way?

I can only give you my opinion on it, and that is that there were people at DC and Marvel that were smart enough to know who that guy was, they weren't total idiots, but on the other hand it's like an exertion of power. If the guy is too afraid to put his name on it, isn't that enough of a thumb on the guy? I think that was the philosophy, to say, if you don't put your name on it, it's all right. That's simply

the company wielding power.

Very early on at DC you started to insist that artwork be returned to the artists.
Well, it wasn't as clear cut as that. When I was at DC Comics I spent a lot of time in the production room. As far as I was concerned, the people in the production room knew a lot more about comics than the editors and just about anybody else. They had no vested interest, they were just doing their job. I spent a lot of time in there, and they let me work at a desk. One day I come in and I'm working along, and there's a guy at the cutting board cutting up paper that looked about the size of comic book pages. My eyes must have widened and popped out of my head. I ran over to the guy and said, "What are you doing?" He said, "Well, every three months, since I'm the low man on the totem pole, I get the job to cut up the originals." Sure enough he was cutting up originals. He put two cuts in the originals so they fit into the garbage can real nice. I leaned over to him and I said, "Look, stop cutting these originals. I'm going to go out of the room, and I'm going to talk to someone about this. And if you cut another original I'll hit you. Just understand that I will hit you." So, I went to try to find anybody who'll tell me what the hell was going on. I spoke to Carmine [Infantino]. I said, "Carmine, this is insane; they're cutting up originals. They shouldn't be cutting up original art because it doesn't belong to DC Comics. It should be returned to the artist. Now, if it comes to it, I don't want my artwork destroyed. I think it would be a really good idea if the destruction of artwork stopped today. And if it doesn't, I'm leaving DC Comics." Carmine went in and talked to Irwin Donenfeld and that day they stopped cutting up artwork at DC Comics. A gesture, who knows? From that point on, the discussion of what to do with original artwork has continued and moved forward. It is my view, that even now, at this late date, original artwork is not handled correctly. My view is that *all* original artwork, if it's pencilled by a given artist, should be returned to that artist. None of that artwork should be



The Witching Hour TM & ©1998 DC Comics. All Rights Reserved.

returned to the inker. If the inker and the penciller choose to split up that artwork by a method which they agree to between them, then they can and should go ahead and do that. An artist goes out and buys a piece of paper. Which, by the way, is the way he's supposed to do it, he's not supposed to work on the company's paper, although he can buy it from the company. He draws on that piece of paper, and then somebody else is hired by the company to provide the service of putting ink on that paper, over the artist's work. That does not make any of that artwork belong to that inker. Nor does it make it belong to the writer. According to the laws of the United States, not *my* laws or *my* opinion, the comic book company is buying the reproduction rights to that artwork and that alone. The proof of that is that they don't pay sales tax. If they were to pay sales tax for real property, then they might buy the artwork, but then they wouldn't have the reproduction rights. It's two separate sales under the law. That's the law. If they buy the reproduction rights, then when they're finished reproducing it, they return it to the person it came from. That is the penciller; not the writer, and not the inker. That's the law. Even now, in this business, it doesn't work that way. About a third of the pages go to the inker. If somebody is providing a service of putting ink to it, that's what they're doing; they're providing the service of applying ink to it. They didn't buy the paper, they didn't originate it. The penciller is the originator and he should get it back, just as the writer should get his script back. If the inker cares that much he can make copies, or he can do the inking on an overlay and get the overlay back. But the original art, in the nature of the law, belongs to the artist. If they [the penciller and the inker] want to make a deal later as two intelligent thinking human beings that give each other a certain amount of credit for the work that they did and they want to share that artwork, that is their decision, and not the publisher's decision. See, I'm a troublemaker, I get myself into trouble with the inkers. At least we get the artwork back. It's being returned to *somebody*, but it just isn't being returned properly at this point, after all this time. I'd like to get that straightened out, but, we'll see what happens.

Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster. Why did you get involved?

The first thing to remember is that from a historical point of view, when comic books were created, they were basically collections of comic strips. The publishers who published them weren't really publishers. More often than not, they were printers. They needed to keep their presses running. They came up with this idea of collecting comic strips into book form to sell them and make some money that way. Then certain publishers said, "This is a good idea except that you can't do that many "comic" books because there aren't that many comic strips. Why don't we hire some young artists to do more comic-strip type things?" So you had detective, adventure, cowboy, and many different cartoon-type comic books. But there was nothing new. Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster who were both from Cleveland, Ohio had been working in comic books since they were seventeen. They had submitted this Superman strip to the various syndicates and received no interest from anyone. So they started drawing comic books for what would become DC Comics. One day, when they were twenty-one, they took this old comic strip that they were trying to sell and they offered it to Jack Liebowitz. Jack decided to put it in the new title he was launching, *Action Comics*. Well, they

sold a million copies. It was the beginning of comic books as we know them. It was the initiation of the superhero comic book. It wasn't what had been done before. It wasn't ghost stories, airplane stories, detective stories, or cowboy stories; it was something totally new and different. Why should anybody make a fuss over Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster? Well, they started our industry. Within two years there were fifteen animated cartoons by the Max Fleischer studios. There was a radio show starring Bud Collyer. There was a comic strip based on Superman. There was licensing, there were serials starring Kirk Alyn on Saturday morning at the movie theater. It burst upon the scene like an explosion. And of course, Jerry and Joe were at the back end of the line. They had created it, but had signed a rather bad contract. There was a time when Jerry and Joe, especially Jerry, presented the idea to DC Comics that there should be a *Superboy* comic. When he presented the *Superboy* comic book he was told to forget about it. Then Jerry want off to war and when he came back there was a *Superboy* comic book. Jerry and Joe ended up in court with DC Comics. To make a long story short, they settled. The court agreed with them that DC Comics did not have a right to do a *Superboy* comic book, that it belonged to Jerry and Joe, even though they had sold Superman. So, Jerry and Joe made a deal with DC. However, the way it works with lawyers and courts is that you may think you made a good deal, but once the lawyers collect all their money, and once you discover how on the outs you are with your own industry, the amount of money that you really end up with is nothing like the money that you thought you were going to get. Your position for the rest of your life can be very disturbing, as it was with Jerry and Joe. There are those that say that Jerry was blackballed. Certainly Joe had difficulty with his eyesight, and had difficulty making a living. Jerry eventually wrote a very long letter that spoke volumes and talked about their history, and what had happened to them. He sent the letter to many different people. At the time I was the President of the Academy of Comic Book Arts, and I got the letter. I made copies and I passed it out. They wrote an article in *The Washington Post* about the letter, they excerpted the letter and ran it in a New York paper; there was a mention in *The New York Times*. I looked at what was going on and I thought, this thing is just going to die. I walked into my studio one day, and said, "Look guys I don't like to drag you into this, but I'm going to tell you what I'm going to do. Anybody that wants to be part of it can be part of it, and anyone who doesn't want to can forget about it and just go on with your work. But I am going to call Jerry and Joe and offer to be their representative, and I'm going to fight to get these guys taken care of, and the reason I'm going to do it is because it just seems like the right thing to do. I can't think of a righter thing to do for the industry that has fostered a good deal of my livelihood and everybody else in the business." As it turned out it took about four months. But it was a very very difficult four months. At the end, Jerry and Joe were taken care of. They got a reasonable living at that time. Before this started, Jerry had a job as a clerk and made seven thousand dollars a year. Joe didn't have a job at all because he couldn't do messenger work anymore. He was being supported by his brother in Queens, in an apartment that I sent a photographer to so people could see how the creator of Superman was living. He was sleeping on a cot in front of a taped up broken window. It just wasn't right. So we fought the good fight. We had a lot of adventures. We went on the *Tomorrow Show* with Tom Sny-

der. Snyder asked Jerry how he felt about the whole thing and Jerry let loose pretty much how he felt about it. Then he asked Joe how he felt about it. Joe said, "Well, you know it's sort of hard to feel bad about it because there are millions of children all over America reading a character I created." Joe was a mellow, wonderful, warm, guy. Joe told me a story that he heard that Superman was going to be a Broadway show, and sure enough in the seventies there was a Broadway show. I said, "Well, what did you think of it?" He said it was great, it was wonderful. He said, "You know what I would do? I would go down there at night, and I would watch the famous people go in. I would spot stars going into a show of a character that I created. Politicians and movie stars and columnists and it was incredible." I said, "That's terrific Joe, but what did you think of the show?" He said, "I couldn't afford to go to the show. I didn't have that kind of money." Anyway, it carved four months out of my life, but they were pretty good months.

Self-portrait.
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Would you say things are much better for creators now?

I'd say things are a lot better. I would say that things are sufficiently better that one has to talk in terms of grays. Things in those days were pretty much in black and white, you could tell more easily what was right and wrong. There were people who were oppressed by it, that were unable to see it perhaps, but it was because they were being oppressed, not because it wasn't obvious. To an impartial observer it was wrong. You don't throw original artwork away. You give it back to the artist. The companies never encouraged the artists and writers to get together. I used to ask artists, "What's your page rate?" And they would say, "I don't think I should be discussing that." I'd say, "Well if you're not going to discuss it then you're not going to get a good page rate. Whatever it is you're getting, it probably isn't enough. I'll tell you what I get. I get fifty-five dollars a page, and that's my page rate. Now if you're getting less than me, you deserve more. If you're getting more than me, I'd like to know it." We weren't threatening to strike or anything, but the dissemination of information allowed people to know what was going on, what it was possible to do. It allowed some kind of a small balance in this whole thing so that people could at least know what they should stand for, and what they should stand *up* for. Little things like that made if possible for us to make big differences. Very often, people don't do that in life. People don't like to admit how much they make but within an industry it is a good idea; you don't have to be a union to compare your rates. I do it in business even now. It's not like I was coming from Mars or anything. These are very sensible things, things that had to be done.

When you draw a comic book, how do you like to do it?

I make sketches and enlarge the sketches up to the size of the page. Then I put them on a light box and trace them off and clean up the work as I do that.

VROOM!!
..NOW!
AT SUPER-SPEED, THE MAN OF TOMORROW CREATES A MAMMOTH VORTEX...
MY TUNNEL HAS ENOUGH MASS TO ACT AS A TROUGH AND CHANGE THE DIRECTION OF THE MISSILES!
MUST TURN ON THE SPEED-- FASTER... FASTER FASTER...
IF I CAN JUST HOLD... THEM... UP... FOR AN... INSTANT... MORE...
AND IN A NANOSECOND, THE DEADLY GLIMMERING OBJECTS ARE DEPOSITED IN THE ATLANTIC OCEAN!...
THE STUNT WORKED... HOPEFULLY WITH A MINIMUM LOSS OF--
MY GOD!!
BEING UNABLE TO PULL THE BOMBS INTO SPACE CAUSES MORE THAN THE DESTRUCTION OF SEA-LIFE! IT CAUSES...

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Page 10 from *Superman vs. Muhammad Ali.*

What is the size of your sketches?
My sketches are very small. I find that I'm able to control the composition that way. Doing artwork for comic books, doing artwork for anything, is a process that you can take seriously or you can not take seriously. If you take it seriously there are many areas of study that bring you to the finished piece. People can either choose to make those studies and to learn those things or they can choose to just wing it. A lot of people are winging it. If you have a large comic-book page, it's difficult to pencil it because it's very hard for the artist's eye to encompass the whole comic-book page at once. He tends to move his eye from left to right and around. When you're working on a smaller piece of paper, what artists have called thumbnails for 200 or more years, your eye can encompass the whole piece of paper. You can create a design, not only create individual pictures, but create a design, and that really has to do with how you want to proceed from there. But the thumbnail is the basic design of the page. When artists don't use a thumbnail technique, it's sort of like building a car without a carburetor. You don't have to use it, you have a car, but it won't run so good. That's probably a bad example, but in effect, what I'm saying is that there are weapons that you use to ply your trade or art and if you choose to put them aside you suffer the loss of them. That's a choice for any artist to make. What I've found is that when I do the small layouts, for me personally, not only do they help me as thumbnails, they also help me get a lot of ideas and other things down. And I tend not to lose the quality of the sketch by throwing them up and tracing them off. That's an additional bonus that I get from it.

Do you encourage artists that work for you to use your technique?
No. Not at all. I don't encourage artists to work in any manner or fashion. I generally try to stay away from opinions because I get into enough trouble trying to change the way things are.

Continuity will be publishing The Rise of Magic later this year. Tell us about it.
We'll be publishing forty twenty-four page comic books. Things change very quickly in the comic-book business, so whether we'll do them in twenty-four page books or we'll combine them in graphic novel books with two stories to a book, I don't exactly know at this point. We're in the process of doing the work and we want to get it all done before we lay that plan out. We're going to try to make it a little bit of a multimedia thing, and also possibly do action figures.

How did the project evolve?
We actually started the *Rise of Magic* during the crumbling of the comic-book industry a couple of years ago, when things were really turning bad. We had done *Deathwatch 2000*, which we'll probably reprint, and that was, for us, a major success. We sold ten times as many copies of each title than we'd sold in the previous years. A lot of people really liked the project. We were moving toward the *Rise of Magic* when the industry started to crumble around us. One of the things I realized was the effort we put into *Deathwatch 2000* we really couldn't put into the *Rise of Magic* and get it out in a reasonable time. I had hired a number of artists for the project and had started to print books that I didn't like to look at. I have a good six or eight books that I am having redone by better artists because I wasn't pleased with the original work. We're starting from scratch and doing the whole project over.

I have a certain pleasant reputation for quality. We're very proud of the fact that we own our own company. We're one of the few companies out there that doesn't have investors from the outside. So essentially, you'd have to say it's an ego trip for me. If I'm not happy and my family, who works here for the most part, is not happy with the products we're turning out, why are we doing it? It didn't make any sense. So we stopped the project.

For someone who might be unfamiliar with it, and I know you don't want to give too much away, what can you tell us about the Rise of Magic?

The concept behind it is this. Before 3500 B.C., the world was controlled by magic. Cities were built on magic. Civilizations rose and fell based on magic. The magic came from another dimension, and had leaked through to our dimension in various places. The major places that it leaked through were the Four Corners Of The Earth, which are actual places in our story. So in those days, mankind was controlled by magic. One day a man was born in two bodies with one brain; he lived in what we now call Europe and Africa. He had two bodies that thought with the same brain, in other words the brain was somehow connected though space. Each part of it knew what the other was doing. That person was a man named Shaman. Shaman is the first Shaman. He is the man that comes from American culture, from South American culture, from African culture, it even comes from European culture. His name exists because one guy existed, named Shaman. A man born in two bodies, actually three bodies but I don't want to talk about the third body just now, and his goal in life was to destroy magic in the world. However, he doesn't really know why. He was a very intelligent man, he even learned how to use magic, and perhaps was one of the greatest magicians of all. But he used magic to destroy magic. He destroyed dragons, magicians, demons, monsters. He destroyed magic in any and every way. He destroyed magic so that mankind was left only with science. Mankind had lived for ten thousand years under magic, and now mankind could no longer use it as a crutch. We move into the twentieth century. After going through some bumps and grinds, including the Dark Ages, we're now wherever it is that we are today. The only difficulty is that magic is coming back, and we need a Shaman to drive it away again. Our modern Shaman, unfortunately, is ill-equipped to drive magic away again because magic has learned a lot over the last five thousand years. Magic comes with friends, friends with power. So Shaman must recruit people from our time, people from the Continuity superhero universe, to drive magic back. The only problem is there exists a poem, and the poem is called *Shaman's Woe*. What the poem says, unfortunately for Shaman, is that in his first quest, in those first two bodies, Shaman failed. He can't figure out why. The new Shaman that's born today exists with the same brain those two guys existed with in the past. He knows what they know, but he doesn't know why they failed. So will the realm of magic take over the Earth? Will the newly risen Atlantis join with all the magic of the world to open the four corners and allow magic to enter our dimension? Who knows?

What other projects are you working on?

A graphic novel. If you were to look at me you'd think I was a fireman or a cop, but basically I'm a geek and my interests are more often not main stream interests. I'm interested in comparative religions and in physics. I'm doing a book that I call "A Conversation

Between Two Guys in a Bar, or . . . A New Model of the Universe." It's basically a dry book and I really don't enthusiastically recommend it to anyone. It's a graphic novel of two guys sitting in a bar having a conversation about a new model of the universe. If it's correct it's going to kick ass, if it's not, it's simply a flight of fancy.

You mentioned Broadway when you were talking about Superman. In the 70's you did some work for a Broadway show called Warp. One of the characters in the show was called Valaria. Is there any similarity to your character Valeria?
I loved the name. I mean, it's not Valaria from the show. But obviously that name stuck in my mind as a great name. It was a shame that there wasn't another Valaria, so I made one. I've always liked that name. I liked lots of names from that show. I'd love to do that show as a comic book. I don't mean to brag here, but I got a Drama Desk award for that show. I not only did the poster, but I designed the costumes for the most part, and I designed the set.

Was that a lot of fun?
Yeah, it was great. To be perfectly honest, I'm more of an engineer and a writer than I am an artist. I guess you'd have to say I'm a reasonably skilled artist. But really, that's not the thing that interests me. I'm very much interested in science and engineering, and when I design costumes I design costumes that work. It wasn't as though I was coming in and people said, well, let's turn this guy's superhero drawings into costumes. I was actually designing costumes. And having a great time.

Do you have a favorite project you've worked on?
I guess I've had favorites as I went along. My favorite comic book project was *Superman vs. Muhammad Ali*, even though it might not be considered to be the greatest comic book ever done. The truth of the matter is that comic book was an ambassador of goodwill from America to the rest of the world. That comic book sold well all around the world, not so much in America, because America did tend to put Muhammad Ali down. I'm a big fan of Muhammad Ali. I feel very strongly that he made a big dent in an awful lot of prejudices that went on in America. He may have increased the prejudice in some people's mind, but he put aside an awful lot of it and made a big difference. He made of himself a person that minority kids could look up to. I got an opportunity to take Superman's powers away and give them back to him. In a sense, I got to re-create Superman. If you pick up that book and really look at that book you can see an awful lot of happiness that I was going through doing that comic book. I was really having a tremendously good time. I was sorry that Denny O'Neil pulled out of that comic book at a certain point, but I enjoyed very much doing that comic book. All around, that comic book meant a lot to me. As far as other favorites were concerned, there was *The X-Men*. When I did my ten issues or whatever it was of *The X-Men*, what that was to me was the experience of doing group superheroes. It seemed to me that up to that point, nobody had really done group superheroes very well. When I was a kid I'd read *Justice League of America* and others. It seemed like the way group superheroes were handled was, there would be a problem, you'd break the group up into groups of two, they would go off and have an adventure, and then they'd come back together and congratulate each other. It didn't seem to me like they were all that integrated. Jack Kirby sort of did a good group comic book when he did *The X–Men*, but he was busy

doing so many other things. When I got *The X-Men* to do, I thought, this is a very interesting experience. How do I keep these characters interweaving with one another, not lose track of their individual stories and still tell a story? I think in those ten issues I showed how to do it. I think an awful lot of people picked up the torch and carried it forward after that. But up to that point I don't think that a group superhero book that integrated the characters together was really done. The book [*X-Men*] was indeed cancelled after ten or eleven issues. It didn't do that well. I was told later on, that at the end it did raise up in sales. If you were to ask why they kept on doing *The X-Men*, I would say that everybody became whipped up at those *X-Men* books at Marvel Comics. I think you'd probably have to credit Roy Thomas and Stan Lee for keeping it going as long as they did. I think that they got together and said, we've got to keep this going, we're getting too much attention from this. But, in the end, Marvel let it go.

Are there any writers that you particularly enjoyed working with?
At DC Comics I enjoyed working with Denny [O'Neil] and at Marvel I enjoyed working with Roy [Thomas]. I felt at the time that they were the best that either company had to offer. I really like working with talented people. Reasonably intelligent, talented, dedicated, careful people who really care about what they're doing.

Who is the best inker for Neal Adams?
I think probably Neal Adams. If anybody doesn't think so, the thing to do is to go out and get a couple of books where I inked my own stuff and another where somebody else did the inking and judge for yourself. I really have no axe to grind; I've been fortunate that I've gotten some of the best inkers, certainly of the time, and a couple of the best inkers in the field. I generally get the best inkers around. I'm just a lucky guy. ❖

JOHN BYRNE

What do you feel is Neal's strongest point as an artist?
There is a stunning reality in Neal's work; but it is a reality of his own invention. He has taken the world as he sees it and made it better. It's realism that transcends reality. Exactly what comics are supposed to be, in fact. Now if he would just do more, the bum!
Of the projects Neal has done do you have a favorite?
Neal's best, strictly in terms of execution, was *Superman vs. Muhammad Ali*. Neal sometimes gets a bit wild and crazy with the panel layouts and camera angles, but that book showed us that he could blow us away with simple, straightforward storytelling. Beyond that, there is the standard litany, Batman, X-Men, Deadman. All quirky. All brilliant.
When you started working on The X-Men did you look at the Neal Adams issues at all? Either for inspiration, influence, or just for the heck of it?
Neal was still pretty much my GOD when I started on *X-Men*. In fact, I've spent most of my career trying to find my own "voice," but sometimes I still look at the pages and think "poor man's Neal."

JOE KUBERT

Were you surprised when Neal suggested you for the Green Beret comic strip?
Oh yes. At that time we had never met. Not only was I surprised, but I was also very much complemented by the fact that Neal had recommended me. I knew of his work, and I had always admired the work that he had done. I was very gratified when he recommended me.
What would you say is Neal's strongest point as an artist?
He draws beautifully. He draws emotionally which is an important element for a cartoonist. He's able to make emotion an integral part of his drawings.
What do you feel has been Neal Adams' greatest impact on the comic book industry?
One thing I've always admired about Neal is that he took chances that most people would not take, and that includes me as well. When he had problems working things out as far as the industry itself was concerned, or if he felt that the artists or professionals were being abused in some way, he was willing to stick his neck out. He was willing to get his head chopped off in terms of his professional life because he felt that what he was doing was right. It think that's an admirable quality all of us can afford to emulate. That doesn't mean he's right all the time, no one is. There are basic disagreements that we have, but I admire Neal for sticking up for what he feels is right.

BILL NEVILLE

What is it about Neal's work that influenced you?
For a while, everything! I tried to *be* Neal for a while; a lot of us did. In the end I became myself, abandoning my futile attempts to capture the dynamism and slickness of Neal's work. But the dramatic thick/thin line weights that Neal uses when he inks himself find their way into my work on those rare occasions when I get to ink myself.
What do you feel is Neal's strongest point as an artist?
As an artist, Neal's a great director. He picks the best camera angles, and gets the best performances out of his "actors." Look at the facial expressions and body language of his characters. Few artists have been better, offhand, the only names that occur to me are Eisner, Kelly, Crane, and Canniff.
Of the projects Neal has done do you have a favorite?
My favorite? Deadman. He's done even better work on other projects, but I first saw his work on Deadman and I was knocked for a loop. I have a strong sentimental attachment to that series.
What do you feel has been Neal's greatest impact on the comic book industry?
The man championed creators' rights. He got Siegel and Shuster on network TV in a successful attempt to get DC to recognize their importance to the company's success. He was the one who educated all of us regarding the significance of Work For Hire contracts. I think the way the business operates was changed by things Neal did 20-25 years ago.

DAN JURGENS

What is it about Neal's work that influenced you?
Several things. First of all, Neal's work was incredibly powerful because it was so different for that time. Back then DC had numerous guys who could draw well, but with the exception of Joe Kubert, nobody conveyed the kind of power Neal Adams did. While many artists seemed to simplify their style for comics, Neal actually made his more complex. He experimented with storytelling techniques, some of which worked, some of which didn't, and illustrative techniques that were primarily, up to that point, the province of commercial artists. Neal's work drew readers in not only for its power but the incredible sense of drama conveyed as well. The various camera angles and lighting techniques pushed the reader's perception of drama on the page to new heights of expectations.
What do you feel is Neal's strongest point as an artist?
I mentioned the incredible sense of drama that came through in his work. I believe Neal's greatest contribution to the medium is that he raised the bar higher than any other artist ever, with the possible exception of Jack Kirby. Even then I'd argue that Kirby's enduring contribution was one of shear creative magic while Neal's was based on the incredible ability to draw and communicate through his work. This doesn't make one better than the other, rather, it's like comparing a great quarterback to a great linebacker. They might have been the best ever at their respective positions without ever taking anything away from the other's contributions.
Of the projects Neal has done do you have a favorite?
Probably his body of Batman work. He redefined the second greatest character in comics with artistic sensibilities that every artist who touches Batman is forced to consider nearly thirty years later.

BILL NICHOLS

What is it about Neal's work that influenced you?
The power of it . . .
What do you feel is Neal's strongest point as an artist?
Neal has a storytelling sense of style that is so strong and so dramatic that sometimes when I'm writing and envisioning the penciled results in my mind, setting the mental pace or whatever, I sometimes imagine what it would look like if Neal was the artist. It leaves an impression on you that you can't deny or ignore . . . As an inker, I sometimes wonder what it would be like inking Neal, but I'd almost be hesitant to even touch the ink to it, for fear of messing it up. Oh, I'd still ink it, of course, but I'd have to stop *staring* at it in awe first.
Of the projects Neal has done do you have a favorite?
The first thing I really remember of Neal's that sticks in my mind is an issue he did of *The Avengers.* The issue where Ant-Man has to actually get inside the Vision's "comatose" body. I was used to regular Marvel fare at that point, so when I opened that book, it gave me the feeling of Magic and Wonder that I truly miss. I have a fondness for that book. Later I sought out the other issues of *The Avengers* he did, and later his Batman and *X-Men* work.

BRIAN BOLLAND

What is it about Neal's work that influenced you?
Well, as far as I can tell, he started working for DC, I've always been a DC devotee, in '67 when I was 16. He came along at the right time for me, when my critical faculties were sufficiently developed. I was ready for something better than had been before. His work was more anatomically accurate and at the same time more kinetic than anyone else. He used dramatic lighting on faces and on the body in a way I hadn't seen before. He pushed figures around in the panels and twisted them about or had them right up close, convulsed with emotion. He didn't just do the standard superhero poses. He introduced a whole vocabulary of facial expressions and physical mannerisms. The inking was always gritty too, whether it was by him or Dick Giordano or someone else. I was always impressed by the way there was no slavish feathering and cross-hatching. It was loose and chaotic but it always worked.

When one looks at your work, can one see this influence and if so where?
I may have attempted an Adams imitation early in my career but I don't think any of that remains. I put that down, in part, to the fact that I never learned to use a pen. I started off on a brush with my earliest work and I just developed along the lines of other artists; such as Nestor Redondo, whose work I loved. Although, apparently, Dick Giordano inked Neal's work with a brush.

What do you feel is Neal's strongest point as an artist?
Through all of the strengths I mentioned before he manages to make you empathize and care about the characters on the page. Also, to me, his work is pure comics. It comes without any of the baggage of the world of graphics and design and post modernism and so on. Which is not to say I don't like those qualities in others.

Do you remember the first Neal Adams work that you saw?
Back in 1973 I wrote my art school thesis on Neal Adams, all 15,000 words of it, and looking at that I see the first thing of his I ever saw was an Elongated Man story from *Detective Comics* No. 369 that was published in November, 1967.

Of the projects Neal has done do you have a favorite? If so what is it and why?
That's a tough one. I've forgotten many of the great moments from my comic collection because I haven't looked at it for years. There was a terrific story in a *Creepy* or an *Eerie* called "Thrillkill." I loved that famous double page spread from the end of the Deadman series. I thought the *Superman vs. Muhammad Ali* book was great. All those fantastic covers for DC mystery books. There was a terrific story in one of those about a little girl who has a nocturnal tryst with the god Pan. The *Superman* and *Action* covers; *The X-Men* stuff. You name it. It was all good.

Any final thoughts?
A few years ago I had the great pleasure in inking his pencils on the cover of *Crazyman* No. 3. It was a very educational experience. Apart from my old pal Dave Gibbons (and recently a page of Steve Rude) he's the only other artist I've ever inked.

You consider Neal to be an artistic influence?
Oh sure. I noticed his work in the early seventies, when I was about twelve or thirteen, and at that point I had been drawing my own comics. I was trying to learn how to draw. It was an eye-opening experience because he was so different from everybody else. Also, the level of realism that his work had represented a gigantic difference from what was in comics at that time. Comics were really a business in the 60's and 70's and people really couldn't afford to put a tremendous level of work into each page, they really had to produce. So when Neal's stuff came along it was amazing!

My first recollection of his work was seeing covers that he did. I wasn't really a DC fan but I remember seeing and being attracted to covers that he had done for *Batman*, *Detective*, things like that. I certainly made mental note of those but being a diehard Marvel fan I couldn't really bring myself to buy those. His first work that I saw, interior wise, would have been in *The X-Men*. *The X-Men* probably led me to look at his DC work, and also Kirby going to DC broke the spell; I was suddenly free to buy the competitor's books.
Of the projects Neal has done, is there one that stands out for you?

The work that was most influential on me was his issues of *The Avengers* that he did with Roy Thomas. The work he did was ground breaking and inspiring. It was just unbelievable. It was the combination too of Tom Palmer inks that made that work. He brought the pencils to life.

One of the things that always struck me the most about Neal Adams work was his storytelling. Neal's point of view, his horizon line, in a great effective panel is always eye level. There's something personal and intimate about that. I think he brought these characters to life because he envisioned them in eye level shots. You felt like you were walking among the Avengers. The money shot was always this eye level perspective which to me made the characters real.

One of the only regrets that I have about a lot of Neal's work is that I have only seen small quantities of his actual pencils reprinted in things like *The Art of Neal Adams*, and various other publications. I think it would be really interesting to see some of his work as it was in pencil form, especially *The Avengers*. Anybody who works in pencils and anybody who works in inks knows that they're very different mediums. You can black in a background in pencils, but when it's inked in it's totally different. Neal's pencil work, from what I've seen was inspiring. His pencilling style, and layout style is so distinct it's almost like Kirby; very simple, very powerful. It takes an awful lot to ruin it. Even if it's not compatible inking the pencils are still strong enough to carry through.

Would you say that Neal has had an impact on the industry in general?
Neal was, especially when he was really active in comics, outspoken. He was always at the forefront of a lot of these artists rights issues, and I think that influenced me a lot. I'd have to say his attitude really influences my generation at the very least, and certainly a generation of people working in the company. I think there is a lot more respect for what people put down on paper now. I think he influenced that. I don't mean he was the only one doing it, there were a lot of other people involved as well fighting for recognition and respect, but he was certainly the most vocal and visible, to me. I think that winds up being his legacy in a lot of respects.

The first project you worked on with Neal was The X-Men?
The X-Men was kind of at a low ebb, and it just seemed to be gradually sinking. Neal came in and he wanted to do a book like that. I had begun to write it just about one month or so before with Don Heck. I had picked up certain things that Arnold Drake had done before. Then Neal came in and was willing to pick it up. I told Neal that I had other work to do so if he wanted to write *X-Men* as well, that was fine with me. I had only gone on *X-Men* again because Stan had asked me to; I really didn't have any great interest writing it a second time around. I was enjoying writing it but it was not something that I couldn't live without. Neal had read other things I had written and asked me to stay on as the writer.

We all thought we were putting out a good product. I was just sorry to see that the sales really didn't improve as much as we would have liked. We had two issues that sold well. The one with the Kazar cover and one that Neal drew with a Marie Severin cover. That was the last issue that Neal did and it was dialogued by Denny because I was too busy. It was selling well enough at the end so instead of completely cancelling it, it was brought back very quickly as a reprint book to keep the book alive.

Were you using the "Marvel Method" at that time?
Yes, and this is not just true with Neal, it was true with most of the Marvel artists at that particular time. This was in the late 60's, right before a lot of new writers started coming in. I would talk over a plot with most of the artists I worked with back then including Neal, Barry Smith, John Buscema . . . In essence, Neal and I would co-plot the stories.

roy THOMAS

"He [Neal] is as good as the field ever saw."

What are your thoughts on the project nearly thirty years later?
Looking back, I would have liked the entire run to have been a Roy Thomas/Neal Adams run. In the last issue, Neal had come to me and said that he wanted to do the plotting himself. I was busy with other things and said fine, I would just go in and do the dialoging. As a result, I did not feel too connected with that issue. When it came in I was still pretty busy; so I ended up giving it to Denny O'Neil to write. I kind of hate that I did that in retrospect because otherwise it would have been a total run of the two of us.

You worked together again on The Avengers.
When Neal came in it took that extra step forward because now the art was living up to the concept. It's not that it wasn't drawn well before, it was, it's just that it wasn't drawn powerfully enough. Neal

roy thomas

wasn't as familiar with the Marvel history as I was, but I could just give him a general idea and he would just run with it and do a lot of plotting. I would plot with him up to the point that he would say that's enough and he would go for it.

What do you think of Neal Adams as an artist?
He is as good as the field ever saw. John Buscema and Neal are two of the very best that you would want to work with in terms of draftsmanship. Neal took the Jack Kirby dynamics and added realism. It was an alternate vision that incorporated Kirby and at the same time some of the realism of others in the field, going back to Lou Fine. I'd love to work with him again. ❖

STEVEN TICE

What do you feel is Neal's strongest point as an artist?
Neal's strongest points are his inventive and well-designed layouts and his ability to draw realistic yet powerful figures. Neal proved that it was possible to draw exciting, dynamic artwork and still draw realistically. Of course, his artistic influence was so pervasive that the term "Neal Adams clone" became a catch-phrase of the comics industry by the late seventies.
Other than as an artist, what do you feel his biggest contribution has been to the industry?
The most obvious choice here would be his stance on creator rights. Neal Adams was one of the first to tackle that topic. His raising the issue in the early seventies set the stage for the reformations that finally took hold in the eighties.
Of the projects Neal has done do you have a favorite?
Oddly enough, my favorite is probably the *Superman vs. Muhammad Ali* book from 1978. The large size of the book allowed Neal's artwork to have maximum impact, and the great inking by Dick Giordano and Terry Austin provided the perfect enhancement to his pencils. Sure, the story's kind of hokey, but the artwork is terrific!

Batman from *Brave & Bold #* 84.

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When did you first work with Neal?
We were yoked into a job for *Creepy* magazine, then being published by a nefarious gent named James Warren, a something-somewhat-more-than-casual friend who was, ironically, the guy who set me up on a blind date with the woman who became my second wife. Jim said, "Why don't you write me a story for this magazine? I've got this Frank Frazetta cover, and I don't have a story for it." And I had some open time in my schedule, so I agreed, and he gave me a transparency of the moody Frazetta painting to work from; and so I wrote "Rock God." That was 1969. Then Warren engaged Neal to do the artwork. In that issue, preceding the illustrated adaptation, there was a "sidebar" page called *The Story Behind the Story of "Rock God."* Neal had done three portraits, really fabulous portraits. One of me, one of Frazetta, and one of himself; and they all appeared on the same page. Elegant, it was; very elegant. I had already known Neal's work, of course, because I had been reading comics for decades, and I tried to stay *au courant.* I already admired him inordinately (though we'd never met, and I knew very little about him personally), because he was the champion who had really been instrumental in getting Siegel and Shuster their Superman annuity from DC. He had relentlessly waged that campaign with great courage, and had been victorious. He was a hero. I always admire people who serve the commonweal, and here was Neal doing this powerfully heroic thing. Later, he even tried to establish a comics artist's guild so that better wages would be paid. He was a very pivotal activist. He wasn't just a guy taking the money from whatever sources he could, and saying screw the rest of the workers. Clearly, he cared about others. I admired that.

harlan ELLISON

"Clearly he cared about others. I admired that."

The second time we worked together was when Byron Preiss wanted me to do a piece for a clever theme-anthology called *Weird Heroes [Volume Two]* in 1975. It was one of the young Preiss's early publishing projects, long before he became the highly successful mogul we know today. It was a paperback original for Pyramid Books. I was asked to create a story about a character named Cordwainer Bird. In this instance, cast as a superhero. You see, "Cordwainer Bird" was — and still is — as recently as this season — a pseudonym that I used primarily in television, though I had used it a few times in magazines over the years, mostly as a lark. But primarily (and I suppose most infamously) I use it in television: when somebody's screwed up my work, changed my screenplay, and I don't think it represents my intent or best efforts, I take my name off, and I substitute the nom-de-plume "Cordwainer Bird." It's a pseudonym registered with the Writers Guild in Hollywood,

and it's an open secret that the appearance of Bird is me disavowing that butchered job by "flipping them the bird" or saying "It's for the . . ."

But Byron wanted me to make Cordwainer a real person, sort of a surrogate-Harlan . . . so Cordwainer Bird became the living protagonist of a story titled "The New York Review of Bird" (parodying the pretentious *New York Review of Books*). Byron had different artists doing the artwork for each prose piece; and I asked for Neal. And so it came to pass that Neal did the artwork, and in fact I own that original artwork. And Steranko did a smashing logo for Cordwainer Bird, a bird face inside a typewriter, which is really cool. Neal did a regally heroic-looking Cordwainer Bird figure with my face on it. I've got it hanging on my wall; it's very pleasant. So that was our second liaison.

The third time we linked . . . I *think* this was the third . . . was about nine or ten years ago. Now Comics had obtained the rights from CBS, and was bringing back *The Twilight Zone*. I had worked on the 1985 revival of *The Twilight Zone* as creative consultant. Additionally, after the CBS prime-time version went off the air I wrote for a third incarnation of the series which was being story-edited by none other than the creator of "Babylon 5," J. Michael Straczynski, who solicited me to do a teleplay for the syndicated *Zone*, being aired for purposes of what we call "stripping." That means: another forty episodes or so need to be filmed, to total the 100 required to put it into syndication. For that series of shows, I wrote a story called "Crazy as a Soup Sandwich," which is a terrific little segment they filmed up in Canada. It's a lovely little show. I'm very fond of it. Anyhow . . . Tony Caputo, the publisher of Now Comics, wanted me to lead off the first issue with an illustrated version of my script for "Crazy as a Soup Sandwich." I said, "Great, I've got the teleplay, the equivalent of a comic book script, so we're all set, and ready to go. All we've got to do is get an artist." He said, "Who do you want? Just name the artist, anyone you want, and I'll get him or her." I said, "Neal Adams." I didn't even have to dwell on it; Neal, I said, instantly. Because I wanted the best. So, la-dee-dah, he got Neal. And that outing was the one where I learned my biggest lesson about Neal: he's even more obstinately singleminded than I am!

Neal was supposed to show me the roughs. Of course, Neal never showed *anybody* any roughs. He'd promise, but forget about it! He was, as usual, so late getting the damned work in, that everybody was foaming at the mouth. He would go straight to finished art; and the primacy of interest of the creator, meaning me, was not his concern. So if anything was wrong, he would suddenly develop a raconteur's skill in explaining to you why the way he did it was the way it *should* have been done and how *your* version which *you* created was, of course, muddleheaded and he was saving you from eternal damnation by doing it *his* way.

Well, the cover and the splash-page are of a guy running down an alley. He's a little loan shark of a guy named Arky Lochner, who has made a deal with a demon to give him all of these winners in the horse races, so he can get rich. But everyone knows making a deal with the devil is dumb, so . . . yeah, he got all the winners, all right . . . except one dropped dead as he crossed the wire, another was scratched for being doped, another was a ringer, another got scratched for bumping in the stretch, and on and on and on . . . he had fifty winners, but all got disqualified. As usual, the demon screwed

the poor sucker. Now, he has to give his soul to the demon. The premise of my story was: if you make a deal with a demon and you want to get out of it, who do you go to for Protection? Who can serve as your bodyguard? Obviously, you go to the head of the Mafia.

Now, in the show, Arky wore a squashy hat. The hat figured in the story a couple of ways. In the opening, it's supposed to be really late at night and he's running down this alley trying to escape from the demon who is floating behind him in the air; boiling out of the clouds behind him. Neal did the drawing. First of all, the guy had no hat, and then if you look down the alley you see cars and people walking by and it's obviously a busy thoroughfare in daytime. So I called Neal and I said, "You've got to white-out the cars and the people at the end of the alley. Make it dark. It's got to be nighttime. It's supposed to be creepy . . . moody . . . scary, not bright." He said, "No, I really like those there. They focus the action."

Grrrr. First of all, you could barely *see* the crap, it was that small in the far distance. It just messed up the story. All he had to do was follow my script descriptions. But he doesn't hear a word you say; he's already framing an apposite rationale for what he's done casually; just so he won't have to go back over what's "finished," in his view. I don't think it has anything to do with laziness, it's just Neal apportioning time-spent to fee-paid. Really pisses you off. It's so bloody commercial, not sedulous. If I have ever had a beef with Neal, something about him I'd call less than noble, it is *that* part of his business ethic. But it's also a manifestation of Neal's arrogance: "I did it, it MUST be correct!" But his talent always compels that you hang in there, continuing to try to smash through that wall of singlemindedness.

He goes on at great length, talking about how he needed these little itty bitty ant size stick figures way in the far distance. And all that daylight. After a while . . . he could wear down the Rock of Goddam Gibraltar . . . finally, exhausted, headachy, I said, "All right, Neal, enough is enough! I've got to have the hat." He told me he couldn't *give* me the hat because he had already drawn such-and-such. I said, "Neal, I've *got* to have the goddam hat; it's in the plot." So he mollifies me, with that, "sure, sure, Harlan, anything you want" crap . . . and I *know* he's gonna jerk me around, I just don't know specifically *how*.

I'll *tell* you how. Neal had managed to draw it falling off Arky's head in the beginning of the story; it was lying in the alley. It does not appear again until the *end* of the story, where the Mafia boss pulls it out of his pocket and claps it down on Arky's head, thereby making it completely pointless and ridiculous. That was the last time we worked together. La-dee-dah. I love his work and I guess, in truth, I would work with Neal again . . . except I would have to take an *awful* lot of Valium.

Do you have a favorite work of Neal's?
"Rock God" is my very favorite; I think it's a killer. Apart from the ones he did for me, which of course I *would* have a vested interest in thinking were my favorites, I think the first few issues he did of Superman are really high points of Neal's work. But there's so much. Any book that Neal has ever worked on, he's made glow. Neal can take the dullest comic and if it's well-written, Neal will give you visuals that are so cinematic, and yet so clean, that he enhances the prose.

There is a quality, that only a rare number of comic-book artists possess, and that is the ability not to confuse you from panel to panel. That is to say, in the inferior work of so many

artists, particularly those who are slaves of the Image style, you'll be reading along, and suddenly someone will appear out of nowhere . . . or there's an arm proceeding from one side of the panel toward the other . . . and the continuity from previous panels is the wrong way. Too often for clarity, an artist will confuse you. You *never* get that with Neal; he has a sense of internal consistency that is absolutely splendid, you might call it a "mimetic gestalt," something like an onboard True North storyline compass, fully tricked-out with visuals; and I think he has an ethical imperative for proper translation into graphic storytelling.

What do you feel are Neal's most important contributions to comics? In my view, he's a pivotal figure in the world of comics. There are artists who come along who do wonderful work, innovative work, even stylistically seminal or germinal work, but they don't change the *face* of the craft or the social conscience of the industry. Neal did that. The people who imitated Neal, and I mean *really* imitated Neal (you could barely tell it was their work or some half-assed Adams parody), are legion. Artistically, Neal is a germinal figure, if not seminal; but as a *man* he has positively altered the state, the ethical structure of the industry; and always for the better. He has never demeaned the craft, as far as I know, even though he's got a troglodyte's reputation for being late, lazy, flighty, irresponsible, and not delivering the product . . . a bemusing rep which is well-earned and richly deserved, but so the hell what? I'm just like that, myself. We could've come out of the same egg, me 'n' Neal. Which — reputation-wise and getting hired-wise — is a problem for *me* as well. When you get very popular, and when you are the only person who can do the polka that you do, then you find that everybody wants you on their dance-card. Everybody wants it *now.* If you don't cash in when you're hot, very soon your vogue will be gone. As it happened with Neal.

Portrait of Harlan Ellison
by Neal Adams
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In the coarsest, cheapest, market sense, where memory is short, loyalty is rare, and callous "businesslike" behavior is rampant, Neal's "vogue" is gone. There's a new "flavor-of-the-month" every year or two. Which does not mean that he is any less a sensational artist, or any less pivotal, it just means that this week everybody is looking to imitate who's hot from 4:45 PM till 6:30 PM today. It's a cyclical industry that has very little regard for it's heroes.

Paul Simon once said that every generation throws its own idols up the popularity charts. Which means that the kids today all drool for the work of the schmuck who does the bad girl art: massive 200 lb. breasts that look like honeydew melons stuck up under Labia Girl's chin. That's their ignorant, corrupted idea of "kewll" art. If a generation of readers is intentionally brought up on crap (because crap is always easier to come by on a monthly deadline basis than is genius), well, they are purposely corrupted . . . and that is what they'll want to see. It's sorrowful. So somebody like Neal, who works with skill and with a distinctive style, well, if it isn't the style that's cur-

rently in vogue . . . la-dee-dah . . . it's no longer considered "hot." As bogus as *that* is.

Is there a bottom line?

Being friends with Neal is like having a cold that you can't get rid of. But if you stay amused, and you're strong, he can be great fun. He's clearly so talented that his nuttiness is excused. And if you wait him out, the work you get will almost always be more than your limited imagination could have foreseen. I'm very fond of Neal. Being friends with someone, even being an admirer, does not mean you cannot comment on what you may perceive — wrong or right — about their character and actions. That's in the nature of treating your friends like fully-formed human beings, not like Dresden figurines or cranky babies. It's honoring them, not lying to them. When all is said and done, Neal is one of those people of whom you can say: he was here, and he mattered. That's why people put up with pains in the ass like Ellison and Adams.

Talent, in the end, always rules! ❖

CONTINUITY GRAPHICS ASSOCIATES, INC.

What follows are Neal's thoughts on Continuity. Also included are interviews with several people who have worked at Continuity over the years.

Where did the idea for Continuity Associates come?

I needed a place to work because I was no longer the queen bee, or king bee up at DC Comics. I had become a kind of pain in the ass. Dick Giordano had been let go, and before he had been let go I was shopping for a studio space at a place called I.F. Studios. They rented a desk to me, so rather than hang out at DC, I hung out there. Then I.F. Studios decided to move into a bigger space, and they asked me if I wanted to take over their current space. The space was really too big for me, I wouldn't know what to do with it. I asked Dick Giordano to become my partner and he did. Dick said, "Okay, we're partners, we've got this studio, what are we going to call it?" I said, "What's a really good hard name? What about Continuity? Nobody hardly knows what it means, so lets call it that." Dick said, "Well don't you think that's kind of a hard name?" I said, "Yeah, but it'll mean a lot in the future." So we called it Continuity, and we started an art studio that grew from there.

You rented space to other artists?

A lot of people wanted to come and work there, and I said, "Dick guys want to work here. We're taking desks off the street people have thrown away, so artists can work here.

Shouldn't we charge them rent?" Dick agreed, and we charged them rent, like fifty dollars a month to have a desk there. There were young artists around all the time. I guess to work at Neal Adams' studio was a big deal so we made it possible. Either people worked for us directly, or they rented space so they could be around. It was a recruiting station. The comic-book business had closed down from 1953 to 1963, there was no place to go to get the career of being a freelance comic book artist started. In effect, we fed people into DC and Marvel, and helped to open up the business.

Continuity has always been about more than just comics.
Well, I couldn't have a studio and be just a comic book artist because it was hard to pay the rent. People don't necessarily know this about me, especially in comics, but 50% of my time was spent doing advertising. The other 50% of my time was spent doing comic books. But two-thirds if not more of my income came from advertising, and only one third or less came from comic books because they paid so badly. That's why we had a studio and nobody else did, because we could afford it by doing projects outside of comics.

Dick Giordano is no longer with Continuity.
No. He wanted to leave, and he was being courted by DC Comics, which I consider to be one of the smartest moves they ever made. I gave Dick a dollar and we agreed to part our ways. Dick went over to DC Comics and became their Editor-in-Chief. ❖

DICK GIORDANO

When did you first meet Neal?
I met him on the day that I started working as an editor at DC, in late 1967. I inquired who was that person working at an Art-o-graph in the windowless, nearly airless, office diagonally across from mine. Of course, it was Neal . . . and we hit it off nearly immediately. In 1968 we worked together for the first time . . . a couple of *World's Finest* issues for Mort Weisenger. They were the first of many Adams/Giordano projects that were exciting, fun, and a learning experience for me.
Tell us about the founding of Continuity.
I'd left DC under less than ideal circumstances, went freelance and spent the better part of a year in my home studio licking my wounds. One evening, about a year later, Neal sensed I was growing restless. He called to outline an idea he had. It involved doing something commercial with the comics format — a new business venture. I jumped at it and Continuity Graphics Associates was born.
What was it like working with Neal?
A never-ending frenetic merry-go-round ride! Due partially to the fact that Neal worked when I slept and slept when I worked. We had fun — we made some money — and we did lots of cool projects. But all good things come to an end and so did our partnership, without bad blood on either part, far as I know.
What is your opinion of Neal as an artist?
A *great* craftsman — a *good* storyteller — a mover and a shaker at that time. He established new standards, new approaches, new techniques. He was the role model for most artists entering the field, and the catalyst for a whole generation of artists and comics.

RONN SUTTON

When did you start working at Continuity?
I was there on an infrequent basis in the early to middle 1970's, so my memories are a bit blurred by the passage of time. I don't remember the first time I met Neal, but I *do* remember the first time I was at Continuity because I thought I had gone up to visit and say "hello" but instead he immediately put me to work.

After that, I could just come by and clear off a space to work. I remember working out in the hallway on a vacant drawing table at least once. You'd help out on a project and fill out a "time card," hand it in when you were done, and get paid on a next visit. I have no idea what *any* of the stuff was that I was working on. It certainly wasn't anything for the mainstream comics. It was mostly comics-style ads or commercial agency stuff. I do remember once inking, and partially pencilling, Spider-Man swinging past the Empire State building. I'm under the impression that it was the cover for a kids' record album or maybe a comic insert for a record.

Much of the artwork I saw wasn't as immediately identifiable as Neal's DC or Marvel work. Maybe it was just laid-out by Neal and the more finished pencilling was done by someone else. However, since all the employees were fans of Neal's work there was something of a "house style," intentional or not.

What was the experience like?
It was interesting to me to see the piles of artwork or stats of drawings and comics that were very well drawn but completely unidentifiable to me because it was drawn for other sources than comic books. I was the novice there and was pretty thrilled just to be there. So I was pretty quiet and didn't mix at all. I specifically remember being there one time and wanting to go over and talk with Russ Heath, because he was, and still is, a very favorite of mine. But I felt too intimidated, which was foolish. I didn't really talk to anybody, although there was a sense of there being both "name artists" as well as people who would later leave their mark.

What would you say is Neal Adams' most important contribution to comic books?
I don't think there's any question that he introduced a more realistic style of drawing to comic books. The quality of the work will speak for itself, but maybe more important was his role as a voice, or reluctant leader in the comics community. The doors at DC were rusted shut prior to his arrival and so he was directly responsible for the first big wave of talent to appear including, Wrightson, Kaluta, Alan Weiss, Chaykin, etc. I think he brought a sense of community to comics, both through the studio as a workplace and a meeting place as well with his involvement with The Academy of Comic Book Artists. I think he had very moral purposes and goals, organizing group meetings, handing out awards, debating about a comics Creators' Union, fighting for creators' rights and the return of original art, fighting DC on behalf of Siegel and Shuster. I think people forget that about him. The younger guys are probably unaware of the battles he fought, at his own expense and often for no personal gain.

How has Neal Adams influenced you?
When I first stepped into Continuity I saw things I had never seen before. Neal used to do these tiny little "thumbnail" sketches of pages and blow them up. I'd never heard of a comics artist going to such extremes prior to Neal. Everyone I'd ever seen just drew "cold" on the board. I'd never seen an Art-o-graph before that, or a light-table. These are the methods I work with every single day now. That's Neal's impact on me personally.

TERRY AUSTIN

How did you start working at Continuity?
I walked out of Marvel one day, after showing samples and being turned down yet again, and ran into Al Milgrom who I'd met for five minutes at a convention in Detroit a year previously. For some reason I'll never understand, he remembered me and asked if I'd been up to Continuity. When I said no, he said, "C'mon, I'm taking you up there," and proceeded to do just that.

Neal looked over the sample stories I'd pencilled and inked while in college, told me how lousy I was, and said, "Here's a nice pen and a nice brush, there's a table over there, now get to work!" It never occurred to me to question an order by one of my artistic idols, so I meekly sat down and proceeded to begin inking the largest head on the page he handed me, a Bob Brown "Lilith" job. About an hour later he sauntered past and froze in horror when he saw what I was doing, and I observed him, out of the corner of my eye, visibly restrain himself from his first impulse which was to jerk the page out from under the hand of this incompetent newcomer while screaming at same, which would have sent me bolting for the door. Instead, he calmly suggested, "Here's a nice door jamb; why don't you ink that instead." I'll always be grateful to him for that bit of self-restraint on my first night.

About two days later, Dick Giordano was looking for an inker for backgrounds on all his jobs, Klaus Janson having recently left to work on his own. Neal suggested he give me a try, which he did, and for the next three years I happily became Dick's assistant, which is another debt I owe to Neal.

What was it like working at Continuity?
I worked and rented office space at Continuity for about three years, I'm guessing around 1974-76, roughly. I shared an office with Bob Wiacek that was next to the coffee machine and the bathroom, two vital destinations for any artist; so we got to see a lot of folks coming and going, so to speak. Around that period, Neal, Russ Health, Carl Potts and maybe a couple others were in the front office. Dick Giordano and Pat Bastienne were in the reception area off the elevator. Continuing down the hall were Jack Abell and Joe Rubinstein in the room next to ours. The reference library was on the other side, followed by Larry Hama and Ralph Reese, and then, way in the back, Mike Hinge, Marshall Rogers and Mike Nasser [now Netzer].

In the course of a typical week, it wasn't unusual to have drop-ins by a number of folk: Walt Simonson, Wally Wood, Roy Krenkel, Alan Weiss, Al Williamson, Howard Chaykin, and so on. Anybody who was in town eventually fell by Continuity and usually were conned by Neal into inking a panel or two on the current job while chatting.

While I was there, Neal also taught me the importance of reference. One day as I sat struggling in obvious dismay to make sense of a penciled telephone on a page I was inking, Neal paused and asked, "What's that on your desk?" "A telephone," I replied. Oh, Yeah. Lesson learned and remembered, Neal.

You mentioned owing a debt to Neal. You're not alone there.
That's true. When I think of him I like to remember that if someone really needed work, he'd find something for them to do. Not just green kids like me, still wet behind the ears. I clearly remember the famous "DC implosion" when DC cancelled much of their line over-

night and one by one shellshocked industry veterans, now jobless and pale as ghosts, stepped off the elevator at Continuity and Neal put them to work. By far, this is my favorite memory of the man.

What was your most memorable experience while working there?
There was the day that by all rights Neal should have killed me. Dead. Finito. Lights out for all time. I've always worked on flat surfaces as opposed to most cartoonists whose drawing tables are tilted at an angle. Back then I clung to one other unusual trait: I worked with the ink bottle actually sitting on the page I was inking. Everyone would always ask, "Haven't you ever had an accident doing that?" "Never," I'd sniff in reply, insulted at this obvious affront to my clearly superior manual dexterity. So naturally, one Saturday the Gods decided to teach me a thing or three about Hubris. I was inking backgrounds on a Frankenstein/Dracula/Werewolf job Neal had pencilled for Peter Pan records, and no sooner had Neal departed for the weekend when I dumped the whole bottle of ink over on the panel of Dr. Frankenstein's laboratory exploding at the climax of the story. As I recall I ran up and down the hallway several times at top speed looking for someone to tell, only to discover that I was alone in the office. Next, I believe I poured a pot of scalding hot coffee over my head, and when that seemed not to have improved the situation somewhat, proceeded to bash myself in the head with the empty pot until I was unconscious. Unfortunately, I discovered upon awakening that the offending blot was still there . . . If that bit of creative license gives you the impression that I suffered the tortures of the damned for the next two days, then it's done it's job . . . Monday morning I tearfully confessed

continued on next page

AS ALF JACKSON LEAVES, THE APPLAUSE STILL RINGING IN HIS EARS...
BACK TO THE RANCH, PETE!
YES, SIR!
THE ALFIE JACKSON RANCH--ONE OF THE BIGGEST IN THE STATE--IS 80 MILES AWAY--AND JACKSON ARRIVES EXACTLY ONE HOUR LATER...
SOMEONE TO SEE YOU, SIR!
HOW-DO, MR. JACKSON!
HELLO, CLEVE! DID YOU BRING THE-- ER-- MERCHANDISE?
YES, SIR, MR. JACKSON, YES, SIR!
WHAT'S GOING ON, CLEVE?
B

Deadman from *Strange Adventures* #211 *Deadman TM & ©1998 DC Comics. All Rights Reserved.*

terry austin

my transgression to Neal, eagerly awaiting the welcome relief that death would bring, only to have Neal nonchalantly say, "Give me two minutes — I'll pop my layout back on the Art-o-graph and do it over." And yes, he did just that, with about 13 seconds to spare, I believe.

I'd like to think Neal got his revenge more subtly a few weeks later when I chanced to glance through a proposal he had written for Peter Pan Records for a muck-monster character similar to the Swamp Thing/Man-Thing personalities then enjoying some small popularity in comic books. What name did Neal choose to give to the poor unfortunate wretch who was transformed by cruel fate into a shambling caricature of oozing slime and pustulence? Yep, Terry Austin. ❖

ERIC KNIGHT

You run things on the West Coast at Continuity?
Yes. I've worked for Neal for about ten years now. I started working in his New York office. When this office [Transcontinuity Studios] opened up I moved out here, and now I run the studio when he's not here.

Of the projects Neal has done, do you have a particular favorite?
Probably Deadman. In the capacity that we work, I get to see his commercial artwork and the design artwork. As far as the comic book aspect of the work goes it's probably Deadman, but there's been individual pieces and stories he's done over the years that have blown me away.

Since you get to see Neal's work in different areas, in which area do you feel he does his best work?
I would say in creating things. Whether it's costume design, or visualizing a ride in a theme park that doesn't exist yet, he just excels. It's as if he's got this magic mind's eye that tunes into these things and makes them real. He has done some phenomenal, amazing work that most people probably never see because it's confidential, or the design was never actually built. Hopefully one day he'll be able to print it somewhere.

Neal did some construction design for a major science fiction film that's in pre-production, based on a classic novel. We still don't know if it's ever going to be made. For this film, Neal did a re-design of New York City around where St. Patrick's Cathedral is. He took us several hundred years into the future with the camera at ground zero with all kinds of street activity, vehicles, characters, futuristic devices, and with a whole new way of looking at anti-gravity. He did this in this giant oversized illustration with big acetate overlays, almost like animation cells. That was probably one of the best things he's ever done.

If you deconstruct some of Neal's art, going back to *Superman vs. Muhammad Ali*, what's not apparent to the casual eye is that there's a story behind it. If an alien happens to be there, Neal's thought out where that alien comes from and what's he doing there. Even though 90% of the time nobody would ask those questions, you can go back and look at specific pieces and find all these stories that are hidden in the artwork.

NEAL'S FAMILY

Are any of your children artists?

My children are indeed. My daughter, Kristine, although not an artist per se, is an associate publisher of Continuity Comics, and represents our company in all venues outside of comic books. My son Joel is the head character creator and illustrator on *King of the Hill*, and before that he was a character designer on the Hulk television show. My son Jason is a sculptor of toys. Right now he's working on a series of Japanese-style models for a company that he doesn't want me to talk about now. He did the toy models for the Mission Impossible movie. He's a skilled sculptor. He did a model for my character Nighthawk and it's going to be done in a kit. It's a really great piece. It was shown at the licensing show this past year, and people were just dying over it. My daughter Zeea, first she started coloring comics on computer, and now she does what is called animatics, which is a type of animation on computer. She's kicked me out of my studio, and taken it over with all her computer equipment. It's a new and very interesting type of animation. We haven't decided exactly how we're going to do it yet, but it is so good that you just sit and your jaw falls to the ground. It's not like regular animation.

You have four children?

Actually five, but the youngest, Josh, is only ten and we don't know what he's going to do yet. ❖

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KRISTINE

Is there a project your Dad has done that you feel stands head and shoulders above the rest?
I like the *Superman vs. Muhammad Ali* project that he did. I enjoyed it on a lot of different levels. I didn't feel that one had to be a comic fan to really enjoy it. I think Muhammad Ali is a great person, so I think it was two great people stuck in an arena. I think out of everything my Dad's done that probably my favorite. My Dad also did a couple issues of Jerry Lewis, which I really liked too. There is also a Pan story for *House of Mystery* [#186] that he drew me in when I was little. It's about a little girl who gets sick and goes off into a dream world.

How has Continuity changed over the years?
When Continuity originated it was a place where artists would rent space where my Dad and Dick [Giordano] worked and the artists could work off of one another. Now, it's more business up here at Continuity; it's not so much an artist's think tank.
How long have you worked at Continuity?
This May it'll be twenty-one years.
What comic book related projects is Continuity currently working on?
We've been working on our *Rise of Magic* crossover for the past six to eight months. Once we're finished with it and we're happy with it internally, we'll announce its release. What Continuity has learned is that we're happier when we produce a good product or project versus just trying to get it out the door because that's what you're supposed to do as a periodical publisher. So in essence I wouldn't say that Continuity is a periodical publisher, we're more a publisher of graphic novels. We plan on coming out with several projects, and once they're completed to our satisfaction we'll put them out on the market.
Will Neal be doing any of the artwork for the crossovers?
He'll be doing inking, I don't think he'll be doing any of the penciling.

JASON

You're a sculptor?
Yes. I do toy sculpting and model kit sculpting.
Were you influenced by your father in your choice of a career?
Yes. I'm a big superhero fan, and a fan of my father's art. I'm not a fan of too many comic book artists. My favorites are my father and Bernie Wrightson. Bernie was a friend of my father's while I was growing up and he was always around. I love his work.

I try to follow my father's style when I sculpt. Anyone that's ever learned under Neal Adams has developed a sense of anatomy that you don't get anywhere else. He really teaches you not just what the muscle looks like, but how those muscles work. Therefore,

continued on next page

there's a different kind of naturalness to your style. A lot of illustrators have bodybuilders model for them, and their work comes out stiff. It looks like the guy is just standing there flexing when he's supposed to be running. They can be fantastic artists but their work tends to be stiff. If you sat down with my father and discussed why something you did looks wrong, he'll sit there with a pencil and he'll be sketching out biceps, and you can just see the muscle moving in his sketch. It's just this incredible thing he can do where it looks like the muscle is flowing. If Conan is holding a sword, you know how much that sword weighs. Very few artists are capable of doing that. It's something that he's taught me.

Do you have a favorite comic book work of your Dad's?

The Tarzan book covers that he painted are my favorite. There's one piece with Tarzan on a white background, where he's let go of one vine, is reaching for another, his legs are tucked under him and he's just flying. It's a fantastic piece. That's my favorite.

What are you most proud of?

The most impressive thing to me in his career was the Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster issue. It gives me a great sense of pride knowing that he is responsible for artists having certain rights.

Clark Kent and Zeea.

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ZEEA

Do you have a favorite work of your Dad's?

Yes, but it's of a personal nature. He did a Clark Kent short story at the end of an issue of *Superman* [#254 written by Len Wein]. Clark Kent has to baby-sit a little girl who is only a year old. Well that little girl was me. He didn't use my name, but it was me.

You're doing computer animation?

Yes. It's a new way to do animation. I'm taking my father's drawings and making them move, which is very interesting. Normally, you have your favorite comic book character that is turned into an animated series. But it winds up looking like a Saturday morning cartoon, which is fine for Saturday morning cartoons. But, if it's your favorite character, and you can get your favorite artist to draw the stuff that moves, how much cooler would that be? The first thing that anybody will see, is the animation we did for a music video for a band called Swamp Boogie Queen, and the song is called Ease My Mind.

Do you have a computer background?

Honestly, not really. Basically I started off coloring comic books on the computer, and before that I tried my hand at hand coloring. I found I was much more comfortable with the computer. The first animation I did on the computer was this dragon that Dad had drawn on a napkin at a diner somewhere. He did these two dragon faces, one with a closed mouth and one with an open mouth with flames coming out of it. Dad just handed them to me and said, "Scan this in and see what you can do with it." I scanned it in, made it move, and that triggered a whole series of events.

WHO ARE THEY?

In the previous pages, we had interviews with three of Neal's children; Neal went into detail about what they are currently working on. Here is a brief rundown about the rest of our contributors for this issue.

Terry Austin Inker of a variety of books throughout his career. His current work includes inking *Green Lantern* and *The Superman Adventures.*

Brian Bolland Penciller for DC's first maxi series, *Camelot 3000*. He has worked on several Judge Dredd books and has been the cover artist for a variety of DC books including *Animal Man* and *Wonder Woman*.

John Byrne He has worked on most of the major characters published by DC and Marvel, often writing, pencilling, inking, and lettering. He also created *Next Men*.

Harlan Ellison In his career, he has had over 1700 pieces published. He has won numerous awards including the Hugo Award (8.5 times), the Nebula Award (3 times), and the World Fantasy Lifetime Achievement award.

Dick Giordano He started in comics in 1951. He has pencilled, inked, and edited a variety of titles. He is currently inking *The Power of Shazam.*

Dan Jurgens Among the many books he has written and pencilled, he wrote and pencilled *Superman #75, The Death of Superman*. He also created the Tangent Universe.

Eric Knight Operations manager and a representative for Transcontinuity Studios.

Joe Kubert His career spans from the 1940's to the present day with the release of the award winning *Fax from Sarajevo*. He also founded the Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art.

Bill Neville He has worked on a variety of books including *Big Bang Comics* and *Elfquest: Blood of Ten Chiefs.*

Bill Nichols He has inked projects for Sky Comics, Caliber Comics, and Knight Press.

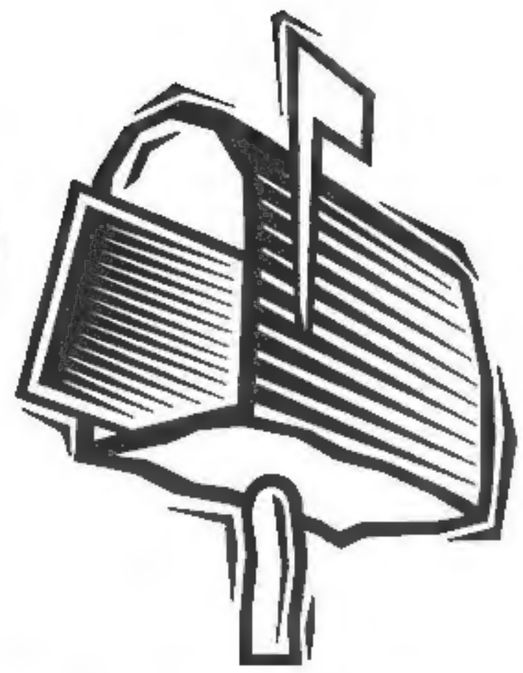
Jerry Ordway Inked *Crisis on Infinite Earths* for DC and was one of the writers on the *Death of Superman* storyline. He is currently writing and pencilling *The Power of Shazam*.

Ronn Sutton He is a regular penciller on Claypool Comics' *Elvira, Mistress Of The Dark* as well as comics published by Draculina, Millennium, and others.

Roy Thomas In a career that spans over thirty years, he has written many titles for both DC and Marvel including *Avengers*, *Conan The Barbarian*, and *All-Star Squadron.*

Steven Tice Publisher/editor of *Musings.* The title is slated to be relaunched this year.

LETTERS



Dear CB Profiles,
I have thoroughly enjoyed your issue devoted to Bernie Wrightson. The idea of committing an entire issue to a single writer or artist is a great concept. I have always felt that the next best thing to reading comics was reading about comics, and as a long-time fan, I have always been very interested in the way that creators work. I would love to see future issues devoted to writers such as Will Eisner, Alan Moore, Marv Wolfman and Denny O'Neil as well as artists such as Mike Kaluta, Dave Gibbons, Howard Chaykin, Jim Steranko, Frank Miller and Bill Sinkiewicz. There are of course many others too numerous to mention. CBP is an excellent magazine, well laid-out and written. I would however like to see more examples of artwork included and the more technical aspects of writing and drawing employed by the creators. Unfortunately here in England, copies of your magazine seem to be in short supply and so far I have been unable to get a copy of issue number one.

Yours,
Michael Crouch

By now Michael, I hope you have gotten the copy of issue #1 that we sent and that you will find it easier to get future copies. Just a reminder that issue #4 will be solicited in June so don't forget to order it from your local comic book store.
You mention more artwork and that brings up a good question. Would most readers like to see more artwork and less interviews or would you rather have artwork sacrificed for more interviews, as was the case with this issue? To keep the price at $2.50, we really can't afford to expand the page count at this point. Of course, the third possibility is to raise the price and add more pages. What do the rest of you think?
As you can see, there were more technical aspects covered in this issue not only by Neal but by several others. We will do our best to continue to provide a balance of material in the interviews. We have also had requests for an index of the artist's work. At this time its not feasible for several reasons. First, space constraints and second, finding a reliable source for the information. I have yet to find an index that has accurate information regarding John Romita's stint working romance comics at DC.

Hello-
I've been excited about reading your magazine since I saw it advertised in Bob Elinskas' *Small Press Feedback* magazine. I then saw it advertised in *Previews* magazine and quickly ordered it at my local comic store Merlin's here in Tampa. This issue was awesome; I could not put it down until I was done reading it. It was really cool the way you had interviews with people who either know Bernie, or who could share their perspectives on his work. Personally I would not change anything about this book. It is a smart idea trying to keep the cost of the magazine down.
A few interviews I would like to see: George Perez, Alan Moore, Frank Miller, Tim Sale, an "E.C. Issue", and a small press issue.

Tony Lorenz

Well, I've run out of room. Take care, and I hope to meet you back here in 90!
Remember our address is:
As You Like It Publications, P.O. Box 2055, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 and the e-mail address is CBPROFILES@aol.com.

WHAT'S ON DECK?

JOHN ROMITA Sr.

In our next issue, John Romita talks to us about his career from his early work at Marvel in the late '40's to the project he is currently working on with Stan Lee. As always, there will be many supporting interviews from family, friends, and associates of John's including; his wife Virginia, his son John, and of course, no issue about John Romita would be complete without Stan Lee. And as always, Fred Hembeck's Final Thoughts.

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HEMBECK'S FINAL THOUGHTS

THE VERY *FIRST* TIME I SAW NEAL ADAMS' ARTWORK, I *DIDN'T* LOVE IT. I DIDN'T *HATE* IT, EITHER--I CHOSE, INSTEAD, TO *IGNORE* IT! IT WAS THE MID-SIXTIES, AND LONG ISLAND'S *NEWSDAY* RAN NEAL'S SYNDICATED *BEN CASEY* STRIP EVERY DAY, WITH A FULL PAGE IN GLORIOUS COLOR ON SATURDAY (*SATURDAY*?). ME, I PAGED RIGHT PAST IT, GIVING IT ONLY A *CURSORY* GLANCE. *WHY*? WELL, LET'S EXAMINE THE *LOGIC* OF AN ADOLESCENT: COMIC BOOKS--*MY* FAVORITE THING IN THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD--INVITED ONLY *SCORN* FROM SOCIETY AT LARGE IN THOSE DAYS, WHILE COMIC STRIPS, DUE PRIMARILY TO THEIR POSITIONING WITHIN THE DAILY NEWSPAPER, RECEIVED *MORE* THAN A MODICUM OF *RESPECT*. WELL, TRY AS I MIGHT, THERE WAS *NOTHING* I COULD DO TO IMPROVE THE IMAGE OF COMIC BOOKS, SO, IN AN EXAMPLE OF THE *TWISTED* REASONING OF A FANATIC, I FIGURED THAT BY SHOWING COMIC STRIPS *UTTER CONTEMPT*, *THAT* MIGHT SOMEHOW *EVEN* THE SCALES A BIT. AND SO, EACH WEEK, MY DAD WOULD CART *ANOTHER* BEAUTIFUL ADAMS PAGE OUT WITH THE *TRASH*! YUP, I *SURE* SHOWED *THEM*, DIDN'T I? (...sob...)

WHEN I FINALLY *DID* SEE NEAL'S ARTWORK WITHIN THE PAGES OF A COMIC BOOK, *THAT* WAS AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT STORY!! *Whew!* I'LL SAY! AND NO, IT *WASN'T* A DC COMIC AS YOU MIGHT SUSPECT, BUT A WARREN BLACK-AND-WHITE HORROR ANTHOLOGY WHERE I FIRST ENCOUNTERED MR. ADAMS' CARTOONING IN THE *PROPER* SETTING. EERIE #9 FEATURED A STORY CALLED "FAIR EXCHANGE", AND THE THING THAT STRUCK ME *MOST* ABOUT IT WAS A PAGE IN WHICH THE PROTAGONIST WAS LAYING UPON AN OPERATING TABLE, PREPARING TO HAVE HIS CONSCIOUSNESS *SWITCHED* TO ANOTHER BODY--HENCE, THE TITLE--AND, THOUGH COMPOSED OF SIX EQUAL SIZE PANELS, THE AXIS WAS TILTED *JUST* SLIGHTLY, LETTING THE READER *SHARE* A SENSE OF *DISORIENTATION* WITH THE SUBJECT OF THIS MAD EXPERIMENT. IMPRESSIVE AS THIS TALE WAS, I DIDN'T BECOME A LIFELONG ADAMS ADMIRER UNTIL SIX DAY LATER, ON APRIL 6, 1967 (I'D WRITE THE DATES I BOUGHT MY COMICS INSIDE 'EM BACK THEN. HEY, I NEVER SAID I WAS A *NORMAL* KID!), WHEN I PICKED UP A COPY OF CREEPY #15. THIS ERA, YOU'LL RECALL, WAS THE ABSOLUTE *PINNACLE* OF WARREN'S PUBLISHING HISTORY, WITH ARCHIE GOODWIN EDITING AND SCRIPTING MOST EVERYTHING. A VIRTUAL PANTHEON OF COMIC ART GIANTS ILLUSTRATED HIS STORIES, AND THIS ISSUE ALONE FEATURED WORK BY STEVE DITKO, JOHNNY CRAIG, AND GIL KANE, NOT TO MENTION ONE OF FRANK FRAZETTA'S *MOST* MEMORABLE PAINTINGS. BUT THEY *ALL* PALED NEXT TO THE DOUBLE-LENGTH (16 PAGES) GOODWIN STORY NEAL ADAMS DREW, BASED LOOSELY ON THE COVER IMAGE, "The TERROR BEYOND TIME." THE DAZZLING ARRAY OF TECHNIQUES, COMBINED WITH A BOLD, HEIGHTENED REALISM, WELL, IT *STUNNED* ME. SAY, YOU DON'T SUPPOSE THERE ARE ANY MORE OLD SATURDAY NEWSDAYS STILL LYING AROUND, DO YOU? (*SATURDAY*!)

OF COURSE, I WASN'T THE *ONLY* ONE WHO TOOK NOTE OF THIS PRODIGIOUS TALENT. FANS *EVERYWHERE* EXALTED HIS WORK, AND IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE YOUNG ARTISTS WERE CLOSELY EMULATING HIS STYLE. AND WHY *NOT*? IT WAS, AFTER ALL, *THE* STYLE. "NEAL ADAMS CLONES", AS THEY WERE KNOWN, SOON *ABOUNDED*. I SHOULD KNOW--I WAS ONE. *WHAT*? YOU *CAN'T* TELL? WELL, AS EVIDENCE, I HAVE A GIANT SPIRAL BOUND SKETCHBOOK FROM MY HIGH SCHOOL DAYS *FILLED* WITH CAREFULLY COPIED RENDERINGS OF SOME OF NEAL'S MOST FAMOUS PAGES, EXECUTED WITH EVERYTHING FROM *BRUSH* TO *BALL-POINT PEN*! FACT IS, A FEW YEARS LATER, WHEN ASSEMBLING A PORTFOLIO OF MY *OWN* WORK IN QUEST OF EMPLOYMENT, DARNED IF THERE WASN'T AT LEAST *ONE* PANEL ON EACH OF MY SAMPLE PAGES WHERE A CHARACTER WASN'T PROUDLY SPORTING THE *GRITTED TEETH* THAT HAD ALREADY BECOME A WELL-KNOWN ADAMS TRADEMARK. (STRANGELY, I HAD *ZERO* SUCCESS IN PEDDLING MY WARMED-OVER ADAMS APPROACH. *SQUIGGLES* SEEMED TO WORK SO MUCH *BETTER* FOR MR. GO FIGURE.)

AND FIGURE *THIS*: NEAL ADAMS CAME IN THIRD--*THIRD*!--IN THE 1968 ALLEY AWARDS BEST PENCILLER CATAGORY! I WAS SO TAKEN ABACK BY THE RESULTS OF THIS FAN POLL, I SENT AN *OVERWROUGHT* LETTER TO A FANZINE CALLED The RB-CC TO *COMPLAIN*. THE ISSUE AFTER MY DIATRIBE WAS PUBLISHED, I WAS SURPRISED TO FIND MARVEL HONCHO ROY THOMAS REPLYING DIRECTLY TO MY *ATTACK* ON SECOND PLACE FINISHER, JACK KIRBY, AS WELL AS ASSURING ME NOT TO WORRY ABOUT NEAL, AS HE WAS SURE TO GET HIS *DUE*. AFTER BEING DULY CHASTISED, I *NEVER* AGAIN TOOK KIRBY FOR *GRANTED*, BUT THIRTY YEARS LATER I WONDER--ARE WE NOW TAKING *NEAL ADAMS* FOR GRANTED? HUMAN NATURE BEING WHAT IT IS, WE PROBABLY *ARE*, BUT WE *SHOULDN'T*. THE MAN PRACTICALLY CHANGED THE WAY COMICS LOOKED ALL ON HIS LONESOME, AND ANYBODY CAPABLE OF HAVING *THAT* MASSIVE AN INFLUENCE SHOULD *NEVER* BE *UNDERESTIMATED*! HECK, BRING ON THAT *SKATEMAN REVIVAL*--

I'M READY!..

AND SOON AFTER, NEAL ADAMS BEGAN TURNING UP IN THE MORIBUND DC COMICS LINE OF 1967. WHAT HE DID FOR THOSE COMICS WAS *IMMEASURABLE*--- THOUGH, INITIALLY, THE *GENIUSES* IN CHARGE DIDN'T QUITE *KNOW* WHAT TO DO WITH HIM. OR MAYBE THEY DIDN'T *TRUST* HIM--WHY *ELSE* START OFF THE *BEST* ILLUSTRATOR TO ENTER THE FIELD IN A DECADE (OR *MORE*!) WITH ASSIGNMENTS LIKE Bob HOPE, Jerry LEWIS, WAR COMIC FILLERS, AND--*MY* FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH HIS DC WORK--AN ELONGATED MAN STORY IN THE BACK OF DETECTIVE COMICS #369? THEY *SOON* WISED UP, THOUGH, AND YOU *ALL* KNOW THE *REST* OF THE LIST: The SPECTRE, DEADMAN, BATMAN, GREEN LANTERN/GREEN ARROW, BRAVE and the BOLD--CLASSICS *ALL*! AND *WHY*? FABULOUSLY *REALISTIC* REPRESENTATIONS, RIGHT DOWN TO THE *SMALLEST* OF DETAILS? Uh huh. TREMENDOUS--*AND* DARING--*STORYTELLING* ABILITIES? YUP. BUT YOU KNOW WHAT *I* BELIEVE WAS ADAMS' *GREATEST* CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMICS OF THE LATE SIXTIES? *EMOTION*. Oh YEAH, THERE HAD BEEN *SOME* EMOTION IN COMICS BEFORE NEAL ARRIVED, BUT *NEVER* HAD IT BEEN PORTRAYED SO VIVIDLY, SO DRAMATICALLY, AND SO RAWLY. IRONICALLY, IT WAS A DEADMAN THAT SHOWED MORE *LIFE* THAN ANY CHARACTER THAT HAD PRECEEDED HIM. NEAL'S CHARACTERS, AS THEY SAID BACK IN THE SIXTIES, LET IT *ALL* HANG OUT!

* HEY! A JIM STERANKO VICTORY!

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COMIC BOOK NEXT ISSUE

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PRESENTS

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JOHN ROMITA

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